

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

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Phoenix, Arizona 85004
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In Reply Refer To:
2824 (AZ-934) P

November 18, 2002

EMS TRANSMISSION: November 18, 2002
Instruction Memorandum No. 2003-005
Expires: 09/30/2003

To: All Field Office Managers

From: State Director

Subject: Interdisciplinary Team Recruitment for Statewide Land Use Plan
Amendment for Fire and Fuels Management

Program Area: Land Use Planning

DD: 11/22/2002

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum is to provide the opportunity for statewide involvement by resource specialists from the field offices and state office. The over all workload will be completed by a contractor and cooperating non-government entities. Arizona State Fire and Aviation staff is looking for dedicated, highly motivated and interested employees to serve as Core Team and Contributing Interdisciplinary (ID) team members for the Arizona State Land Use Plan (LUP) Amendment for Fire, Fuels and Air Quality Management. The mission of the team is to be available for consultation, contributions and coordination of specific specialties and the willingness to work with outside entities in the developing and completion of an environmental assessment for seven Field Office LUP amendments.

Proposal: The amendment will enable management to reduce the risk and cost of severe wildland fires and to identify opportunities to use prescribed fire and other fuel management techniques to reduce hazardous fuel buildup and to achieve other resource management objectives. The amendment will be tiered to through the development of the State Fire Management Plan(s) to identify statewide fire management objectives, constraints, workloads, equipment needs, and the anticipated costs associated with the fire management program.

Policy/Action: To develop Core and Contributing Interdisciplinary (ID) teams from State and Field Office(s) personnel. Please see Attachment 1, for the background information and IM's for completed policies.

The State Fire and Aviation Staff have developed recommendations to assist in the accomplishment and success of this planning effort, including but not limited to the following:

The State Director will:

- Identify fire management planning a high priority within Arizona BLM for the statewide Core and Contributing ID team members.
- Direct Field Office (FO) Managers/Monument Managers to assist in the filling of the needed positions for the planning teams.
- Direct program leads to fill or make available SO Contributing team members for statewide review.

The Field /Monument Managers will:

- Assist in filling the appropriate level of expertise of selected members for the Core ID team by Friday, November 22, 2002.
- Will make available the ID team member(s) to review the preliminary and final documents throughout the planning effort.

The Core Team will:

- Identify appropriate State Office (SO) Contributing ID team members for statewide review and standardization of documentation and data to and from the contractor and ID team members from the field office(s).
- Designate a lead Contract Officer Representative.
- Designate a Liaison for The Nature Conservancy.
- Convey the priority for completing fire management planning to each contributing member.
- Attend all pertinent FO ID team meetings, including other office meetings.
- Coordinate the needs assessment from the contractor, to the Contributing ID team member(s).

The following positions have been identified as open positions for the Core Team Members from the field offices. The persons filling these positions do not need to have fire or fuels backgrounds, but do need basic understanding of fire and fuels management practices. These positions are available on a first-come, first-serve basis (one person only for each identified position):

1. Rangeland Management Specialist
2. T&E Specialist
3. Archeologist
4. Wildlife Biologist
5. Soil, Water and Air Specialist
6. NEPA and Planning Coordinator (in addition to the Team Leader)
7. Fuels Management Specialist

Contributing members will contribute to the statewide review and standardization of documentation and data to and from the contractor and ID team members from the field office(s):

- Assist and provide technical guidance to their FO/SO/contracting counterparts for each field office ID team meeting.
- Be available to review the contractor's preliminary and final document(s) during the life of the planning effort.
- Assist in the determination and the direction of appropriate level of local outreach, public participation, and coordination.
- Contribute background materials and provide identified items to the Core team and contractor to develop and complete the planning effort.
- Review and contribute to the input from each of the field office ID team meeting(s) to complete the various levels of analysis for the LUP Amendment.

The Contributing ID team members will be from the State Office Resource Divisions. These members will be made up of one each:

1. Rangeland Management Specialist
2. T&E Specialist
3. Archeologist
4. Wildlife Biologist
5. Soil, Water and Air Specialist
6. Fire Management Staff

Coordination: It is understood that all Fire Management Officers will be a part of the ID Team process at each field office.

Time fame: This IM is effective upon signing.

Budget Impact: Funding for the Arizona State Land Use Plan (LUP) Amendment for the ID team members travel will come the fuels management sub-activity.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: Six RMP's, Phoenix, Kingman, Arizona Strip, Safford, Yuma, Lower Gila South and one MFP the Lower Gila North.

Compliance: To be in compliance with the National Fire Plan and Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy 2000. In addition with IM2002-034, which calls for RMP level decisions and WUI Strategy for AZ BLM Administered Lands.

Public Interest: Consultation and coordination with the public will be appropriate, especially in the areas with high-risk levels of hazardous fuels. In addition, state and local officials, congressional offices, and other management agencies will be consulted and coordinated with.

Contact: For additional information or questions, please call Pam McAlpin, State Fire Management Officer, State Office, (602) 417-9309 and/or Sherry Hirst, Fuels Management NEPA Planner and Environmental Coordinator, Kingman Field Office, (928)-692-4400.

SIGNED BY:
Carl Rountree
For Elaine Y. Zielinski

AUTHENTICATED BY:
Bobbie Junge
Division Staff Assistant

Attachments:

1. IM2002-034 State Strategies RMP level decisions (10 pp)
2. AZ WUI Strategies (2 pp)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

November 13, 2001

In Reply Refer To:
1620 (WO-210) P
9211 (FA-600)

EMS TRANSMISSION 11/15/2001
Instruction Memorandum No. 2002-034
Expires: 09/30/2003

To: SD's, AD's and AFO's

From: Director

Subject: Fire Management Planning

DD:12/07/2001

Program Area: Land Use Planning and Fire Management Planning.

Purpose: To provide additional information and guidance regarding the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and the treatment of wildland fire management in land use plans, fire management plans, and implementation-level plans and projects. Requires submission of State strategies on or before December 17, 2001 for completing Fire Management Plans by the end of 2004 (see key implementation actions, page 3).

Background: The BLM should have a consistent approach to incorporating the National Fire Plan and the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy in land use plans. The current and upcoming planning efforts, including the Time Sensitive Plans, provide an opportunity for BLM to accomplish this goal. Land use plans not involved in the current and upcoming planning efforts also need to conform to the National Fire Plan and the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy in regard to implementing fire management. This document provides guidance on how to incorporate national direction on fire management into land use plans, fire management plans, and implementation-level plans and projects.

Policy/Action:

I. Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and direction that relate to fire management planning (from the Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, 2001, and other national fire-related policy).

Guiding principles related to fire management and fire management planning:

The role of wildland fire as an essential ecological process and natural change agent will be incorporated into the planning process.

Fire Management Plans, programs, and activities support resource management plans and their implementation.

Fire management programs and activities are economically viable, based upon values to be protected, costs, and land and resource management objectives.

Policy statements related to fire management and fire management planning:

Firefighter and public safety is the first priority. All Fire Management Plans and activities must reflect this commitment.

Fire as a critical natural process, will be incorporated into land use plans and activities on a landscape scale and across agency boundaries. Response to wildland fire is based on ecological, social, and legal consequences of the fire. The circumstances under which a fire occurs and the likely consequences on firefighter and public safety and welfare, natural and cultural resources, and values to be protected dictate the appropriate management response to the fire.

Wildland fire will be used to protect, maintain, and enhance resources and, as nearly as possible, be allowed to function in its natural ecological role. This will aid in achieving land health standards (see BLM Manual 4180 - Rangeland Health Standards).

Use of fire will be based on approved land use plans and Fire Management Plans and will follow specific prescriptions contained in operational plans. Factors to be considered in determining the use of fire will include such things as public and firefighter safety and the ability to use fire without jeopardizing key ecosystem components, species viability, water quality, and cultural and historic resources.

Rehabilitation and restoration efforts will be undertaken to protect and sustain ecosystems, public health and safety, and to help communities protect infrastructure.

Every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved Fire Management Plan. Fire Management Plans are strategic plans that define a program to manage wildland and prescribed fires based on the area's approved land use plan. Fire Management Plans must provide for firefighter and public safety; include fire management strategies, tactics, and alternatives; address values to be protected and public health issues; and be consistent with resource management objectives, activities of the area, and environmental laws and regulations.

Fire Management Plans and programs will be based on a foundation of sound science. Research will support ongoing efforts to increase our scientific knowledge of biological, physical, and sociological factors. Information needed to support fire management will be developed through an integrated interagency fire science program. Scientific results must be made available to managers in a timely manner and must be used in the development of land management plans, Fire Management Plans, and implementation plans.

Fire management planning, preparedness, prevention, suppression, fire use, restoration and rehabilitation, monitoring, research, and education will be conducted on an interagency basis with the involvement of cooperators and partners.

Key implementation actions related to fire management and fire management planning:

Incorporate mitigation, burn plan rehabilitation, and fuels reduction and restoration activities that contribute to ecosystem sustainability into Fire Management Plans and resource management plans. There is a need to more effectively and directly integrate fire management activities with other natural resource goals.

Respond to wildland fires based on approved Fire Management Plans and land use plans regardless of ignition source or the location of the ignition. The management response to fires, regardless of source, must be based on the approved Fire Management Plan. Fire Management Plans, based on the land management objectives of the area, guide the appropriate response through criteria and prescriptions.

Complete, or update, by the end of FY 2004 Fire Management Plans for all areas with burnable vegetation. Fire Management Plans, based on the underlying land use plans, are the principle foundation for implementation of the 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.

Consider whether plan amendments are needed to implement the National Fire Plan and comply with the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy if plans are not undergoing revision in the near future. A Fire Management Plan in compliance with the Federal Fire Policy must be based on the area's land use plan which identifies the fire management decisions outlined in Appendix C of the Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1). If a land use plan does not identify the necessary fire decisions and if the plan is not currently scheduled to be revised or replaced, proceed with a land use plan amendment to ensure fire guidance will be in place by the end of FY 2004. State Directors should prepare a strategy for completing Fire Management Plans/land use plan amendments not currently scheduled. Please provide copies of the strategy to Henry Bisson, Assistant Director for Renewable Resources and Planning, and to Larry Hamilton, National Director, Office of Fire and Aviation, by December 17, 2001.

Suppress fires in areas without approved Fire Management Plans or in areas with Fire Management Plans that are not consistent with the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.

II. Incorporation of wildland fire planning into resource management plans (RMPs), fire management plans (FMPs), and implementation projects.

The following sections describe the interrelationships and types of decisions and determinations made at the RMP level, fire management plan level, and implementation level.

A. RMP-level Decisions/Analysis

The fire management categories identified in H-1601, Appendix C must be identified and constitute RMP decisions in the current and upcoming planning efforts. These fire management categories are further defined in Attachment 1.

The land use plan must identify resource objectives at a level of detail sufficient to guide future fire activities. These resource objectives should consider such things as desired vegetation composition/type, wildlife habitat conditions, watershed and riparian condition, visual resources, visitor use/public access, and cultural resource conditions.

The land use plan must identify the anticipated type and level of fire activity and fuel treatment to achieve resource objectives (see Item E in Attachment 1). These are normally described by fire management category and include the following:

- Targets for fire size or acreage burned over certain time-periods

- Estimated levels (acreage) of fuel treatment:

- Prescribed fire

- Mechanical

- Chemical

- Biological

- Rehabilitation guidance

The land use plan must identify any constraints or resource considerations related to fire suppression or fire management activities (see Item F in Attachment 1). These are normally described by fire management category and include the following:

Specific suppression constraints (e.g., restrictions on the use of dozers or retardant)
Restrictions on fire activities necessary to protect sensitive resources (e.g., cultural resources or special status species)

Priorities for site-specific fuel treatments are generally identified in implementation documents. However, the land use plan may identify broad priorities for treatment (e.g., fuel treatments in the wildland urban interface, or fuel treatments to reduce risk to special status species habitats, water quality, and cultural and historic resources).

Information from other resource programs is needed in order to delineate appropriate fire management categories outlined in Appendix C of the planning handbook. An interdisciplinary team is needed to conduct the appropriate NEPA analysis and decision-making process for the RMP-level as well as implementation-level decisions. This information includes threatened and endangered species needs; vegetation objectives; soil and watershed objectives; noxious weed considerations; anthropological, historic, cultural, and archeological sites; visual resource classifications, visitor and recreation management objectives; etc. Fire information needs include fire regimes and fuel types.

Fire management decisions must be carefully coordinated with other BLM resource program decisions as well as decisions of other Federal, tribal, State and local agencies/jurisdictions.

B. Fire Management Plan Decisions/Analysis

Fire management plans are strategic documents that do not normally include specific resource management decisions. Resource decisions are usually made at the land use plan or project implementation level.

Fire management plans that are administrative or procedural in nature and do not include resource management decisions (e.g., the identification of site-specific resource objectives, desired conditions, or projects) will normally qualify as a categorical exclusion for NEPA purposes (See 516 DM 2, Appendix 1, 1.10).

Fire management plans that identify any new resource management decisions (e.g., the identification of site-specific resource objectives, desired conditions or projects) will require an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Components of a fire management plan include:

Suppression standards or constraints identified in the land use plan or other activity plans.

Go/No-go Checklists, including prescriptive criteria to meet fire objectives identified in the land use plan. (See Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy - Implementation Procedures Reference Guide, August, 1998).

Supporting or interrelated plans that may be incorporated by reference, such as:

- Safety Plan
- Training Plan
- Prevention Plan
- Pre-attack Plan
- Detection Plan
- Suppression Plan
- Extended Attack Plan
- Preparedness Plan
- Aviation Plan
- Etc.

The Department of the Interior and the USDA – Forest Service have chartered an interdepartmental Work Group to review fire management planning procedures currently in use by the various Federal agencies. This group has been tasked with developing a single, landscape scale, Fire Management Plan (FMP) template. The template will provide for a seamless, cross-boundary approach to wildland fire management and will include standard format and terminology; guidance for consistent application, including a review process and integration with land use planning efforts; and a schedule for completion of all new FMPs by the end of FY 2004.

The Work Group consists of representatives from the Forest Service and the DOI fire management bureaus. The group will seek appropriate internal and external peer review and incorporate this into their final report, due March 30, 2002.

The BLM must recognize the direction of the Departmental FMP Work Group in current and upcoming planning efforts. Specifically, BLM plans must recognize that fuel hazard conditions do not recognize administrative boundaries, nor do the solutions. In designating fire management categories, fuels treatments, constraints and resource considerations, BLM land management plans must comply with Departmental policy and ensure that resource management decisions reflect on-the-ground conditions and solutions of adjacent Federal, tribal, state and local governments, and private stakeholders.

Implementation Decision/Analysis

These decisions put into action the direction outlined in the RMP and Fire Management Plan.

An appropriate NEPA document must be prepared. The NEPA document can tier to, or incorporate by reference, any applicable NEPA analysis that has been prepared at the RMP or fire management plan levels.

Examples of implementation decisions include the following:

- Prescribed fire plans and projects

- Fuel reduction projects

- Urban interface hazardous fuel treatment projects

(Note: Go/No-Go checklists may also be included in implementation plans/projects).

Coordination: In developing this guidance, input was requested and/or received from various Washington Office, Office of Fire and Aviation, State Office and Field Office personnel.

Contact: Ann Aldrich, Group Manager, Planning, Assessment and Community Support, (202) 452-7722; or Ted Milesnick, Chief, Fire Planning and Research, Office of Fire and Aviation, (208) 387-5198.

Signed by:

Nina Rose Hatfield
Acting Director

Authenticated by:

Barbara J. Brown
Policy & Records Group, WO-560

1 Attachment

1- Clarification of Fire Management Categories and RMP-Level Decisions (2 pp)

Clarification of Fire Management Categories and RMP-Level Decisions

H-1601-1 - Land Use Planning Handbook (Appendix C.I.J.)

A. Category AA@ Areas. Areas where fire is not desired at all.

General description: This category includes areas where mitigation and suppression is required to prevent direct threats to life or property. It also includes areas where fire never played a large role historically in the development and maintenance of the ecosystem, and some areas where fire return intervals were very long. Examples are very mesic sites, very xeric sites and riparian areas.

Fire Mitigation Considerations: Emphasis should be focused on those actions that will reduce unwanted ignitions and reduce losses from unwanted wildland fires. [Note: A Wildland Fire Mitigation@ is defined as: Those fire prevention and education actions that reduce unwanted human-caused ignitions; and those fuels management activities that reduce undesirable impacts and loss to life, property and natural and cultural resources.]

Fire suppression considerations: Emphasis should be placed on prevention, detection, and rapid suppression response and techniques.

Fuel treatment considerations: Non-fire fuel treatments should be employed.

B. Category AB@ Areas. Areas where unplanned wildfire is not desired because of current conditions.

General Description: These are ecosystems (including some urban-interface areas) where an unplanned ignition could have negative effects unless/until some form of mitigation takes place. Sagebrush ecosystems, for example, can fall into this category because of encroachment of cheatgrass or a prolonged lack of fire which leads to large monotypic stands of sagebrush that won't burn as they historically would have.

Fire Mitigation Considerations: Emphasize prevention/mitigation programs that reduce unwanted fire ignitions and resource threats.

Fire suppression/use considerations: For unplanned wildfire, suppression is the objective of this category.

Fuel treatment considerations: Fire and non-fire fuels treatments are utilized to reduce the hazardous effects of unplanned wildfire. Restorative treatments may consist of multiple non-fire treatments before the use of fire will be considered.

C. Category AC@ Areas. Areas where wildland fire is desired, but there are significant constraints that must be considered for its use.

General Description: Areas where significant ecological, social or political constraints must be considered. These constraints could include air quality, threatened and endangered species considerations (effect of fire on survival of species), or wildlife habitat considerations.

Fire Mitigation Considerations: Programs should reduce unwanted fire ignitions and resource threats.

Fire suppression/use considerations: Resource considerations could be described in terms of maximum burn acreage (e.g., no more than 10% of the polygon acreage can burn in a year to preserve sagegrouse habitat), in terms of time of year (e.g., spring only), or as desired burned acres per decade from all types of fire. Areas in this category would generally receive lower suppression priority in multiple wildfire situations than would areas in the A or B categories.

Fuel treatment considerations: Fire and non-fire fuels treatments may be utilized to ensure constraints are met or to reduce any hazardous effects of unplanned wildfire.

D. Category AD@ Areas. Areas where wildland fire is desired, and there are few or no constraints for its use.

General Description: Areas where unplanned and planned wildfire fire may be used to achieve desired objectives such as to improve vegetation, wildlife habitat or watershed conditions.

Fire Mitigation Considerations: Implement programs that reduce unwanted human-caused ignitions, as needed.

Fire suppression/use considerations: These areas offer the greatest opportunity to take advantage of the full range of options available for managing wildfire under the appropriate management response. Resource use considerations similar to those described for Category C may be identified if needed to achieve resource objectives. Areas in this category would be the lowest suppression priority in a multiple fire situation.

Fuel treatment considerations: There is generally less need for fuel treatment in this category. If treatment is necessary however, both fire and non-fire treatments may be utilized.

E. Broad Treatment Levels. For the A-D categories identified above, the land use plan must identify the level of anticipated fire activities (e.g. type/level of fuel treatment and amount of prescribed fire) or the associated NEPA analysis must assume an anticipated level of fire activity (reasonable foreseeable development levels).

F. General Restrictions. For the A-D categories identified above, the land use plan should identify any constraints or resource considerations related to fire suppression or fire management

activities (e.g., restrictions on the use of dozers or retardant; targets for fire size or percentage of area burned over certain time-periods; etc.).

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Arizona State Office

222 N. Central Avenue

Phoenix, Arizona 85004

www.az.blm.gov

In Reply Refer to:

9200 (934)

April 17, 2001

EMS TRANSMISSION: 04/25/01

Memorandum

To: State Leadership Team

From: State Director

Subject: Arizona BLM Wildland Urban Interface Strategy

It is BLMs shared responsibility to reduce the risk of wildland fire within Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas through wildland firefighting, hazardous fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance. This memorandum establishes the statewide strategy to implement an efficient and effective WUI hazardous fuels reduction program. To review the implementation strategy, listed as attachments to this memorandum, please click on the following website: <http://azweb.azso.az.blm.gov/>.

A growing number of areas in Arizona have a need for fuel reduction, but have not been fully analyzed for treatment. This strategy incorporates specific criteria to determine the risk levels in the WUI, and applies site specific project level analysis to implement the fuels reduction program.

The WUI strategy is a dynamic process consisting of two phases. Phase I has recently been accomplished and has established the risk levels of all communities in Arizona within one mile of BLM lands. Using Phase I analysis, risk levels were determined using the criteria of population density, fire density, and fire behavior and resistance to control. It is important to note this list is dynamic and may change as additional data becomes available and/or as conditions change. Phase II of the strategy addresses, first, the high risk communities. In time, BLM will begin testing the moderate risk communities. Currently, BLM is beginning to work with these high risk communities to decrease and maintain wildland fuels at a manageable level, creating conditions conducive to safe, efficient, and effective firefighting.

Last year, the strategy was reviewed and approved by an interagency panel. The panel's conclusion was that the tested criteria used in the strategy provides an efficient, consistent, and dynamic system for rating wildland fire risk levels in WUI areas. It is important to note that BLM can quantify the community data and easily adapt it to meet the requirements of the National Fire Plan.

The full implementation of this strategy includes two tasks: 1) completion of Phase II analysis for the six high risk communities in FY 2001, and 2) beginning the secondary evaluation of the moderate risk communities in FY 2002. If you have any questions about the attached WUI Strategy and its requirements, please contact the (Acting) Fire Management Officer, or Pam McAlpin, BLM Fire Use Specialist, in the Arizona State Office at (602) 417-9336.

SIGNED BY:

AUTHENTICATED BY:

Carl Roundtree

Maria Roberts

for Denise P. Meridith

Staff Assistant

State Director

Attachment

1 - Arizona BLM Wildland Urban Interface Strategy (14 pp.)

2 - WUI Risk Determination System for Areas Managed by Arizona BLM (74 pp)